THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • TUESDAY • APRIL 26, 2022 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

INDONESIA'S PALM OIL EXPORT BAN MAY HIT INDIAN INDUSTRY

Edible oil prices are already on fire as imports have halved due to the Ukraine war; palm oil shortage will make the situation worse

FOOD PROCESSING, FMCG FIRMS UNDER PRESSURE

Analysts say the move will further push up the prices of other edible oils such as soybean oil and sunflower oil. As palm oil is a key ingredient used in the food processing and consumer goods industries, the ban will have a cascading effect, jacking up the prices of items such as potato chips, noodles, frozen desserts, biscuits and other snacks that use edible oil

CRUDE PALM OIL MAY BE EXCLUDED

- Indonesia, the world's largest palm oil producer, announced the ban on Saturday in a bid to cool domestic prices. While no details were spelt out then, some experts believe the ban will exclude crude palm oil, which is mostly used by FMCG firms. In which case, it may not have a huge adverse effect on India | P13

April 28
WHEN INDONESIA'S BAN ON PALM OIL EXPORTS WILL COME IN TO EFFECT

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Lone Covid hotspot B'luru brings back mask mandate

Health officials focus on contact tracing, changing testing strategies

RAMU PATIL AND CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

BENGALURU'S single-handed push aiding a rise in Covid-19 cases in Karnataka, and increasing cases in other states, have forced the state government to declare wearing of masks mandatory again. Guidelines were issued on Monday, asking people to maintain a social distance of two feet in public places.

Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar, however, said although masks are mandatory, as of now, fines will not be imposed on those violating the guidelines, and appealed to people to take the guidelines seriously to prevent Covid-19 spread.

The guidelines were issued after Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's meeting with experts to take stock of the situation after a slight increase in the state's caseload, almost solely driven by Bengaluru.

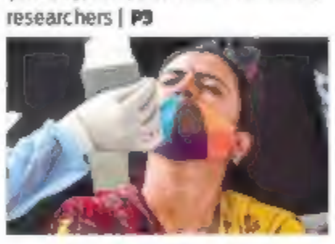
The CM held the meeting with experts ahead of the Prime Minister's meeting with the Chief Ministers on Wednesday, to discuss precautionary measures to be taken to prevent a fourth wave.

While most districts continue to report zero cases, Bengaluru Urban has been adding nearly 98 per cent of the daily Covid-19 caseload. Of 64 cases across Karnataka on Monday, 63 were from Bengaluru and one from Dakshina Kannada, while 28 remaining districts on the health department's data list had zero cases. This trend has been consistent over the past several days.

The positivity rate in the city peaked at 3.4 per cent on Saturday, which is well above the national average of 0.97 per cent. Health officials are now focusing on strict contact tracing, changing testing strategies and strict surveillance methods to contain the spread in Bengaluru. "Bengaluru has seen an uptick in cases. However, we are taking all precautions and measures to contain the spread. Wearing of masks is the first and foremost thing all Bengalurueans should do," said Dr KV Thrilok Chandra, Special Commissioner, BBMP (Health). P3

ASTHMA DRUG CAN BLOCK COVID PROTEIN

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru found a drug used to stave off asthma attacks can block a vital protein produced by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that targets the immune system. The protein, which researchers say unlikely to change through Covid-19 variants, can be targeted by the drug, said Tanweer Hussain, assistant professor in the Department of Molecular Reproduction, Development and Genetics (MRDG), IISc, and one of the lead researchers | P9



NATIONWIDE	APR 24	APR 25
Fresh cases	2,593	2,541
Recoveries	1,755	1,862
Deaths	64	30
KARNATAKA	**APR 24**	**APR 25**
Fresh cases	60	64
Recoveries	63	69
Deaths	0	0

JAB-O-METER
TAKE YOUR SHOT
April 24: 3,84,210 doses
April 25: 20,55,837 doses

Forest dept warns of 'killer trees' due to works

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

THE death of two travellers, including a two-year-old child, on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway on Monday morning, after a heavy tree branch fell on their moving car, is a warning that should not be ignored.

Karnataka forest department officials have warned of more such incidents as roadside trees are becoming vulnerable due to ongoing civil works on roads in the city and its outskirts.

Officials have alerted the state government, and listed some roads and areas where trees are becoming weak — Mysuru Road, Magadi Road, Malleswaram, Palace Road, Raj Bhavan Road, RR Nagar, Mahadevapura, Bellandur, Ring Road, among others.

The mangled remains of a Maruti Omni, on which a tree branch fell on Monday morning, killing the driver and his toddler son, on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway.

Officials said trees are becoming vulnerable because of unplanned and unscientific civic works by engineers of various government agencies, like Karnataka Road Development Karnataka Road Development Corporation, National Highway Authority of India, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, energy department, Bangalore Water Supply & Sewerage Board, Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) and other agencies. The caution comes even as the forest department is undertaking a survey of the total number of trees in Bengaluru and their health condition. P2

Twitter goes to Musk in $44-billion deal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

AFTER trying to swat him like a fly barely 10 days ago, social media giant Twitter on Monday accepted billionaire Elon Musk's proposal to buy the platform for $54.20 a share in cash in a transaction valued at approximately $44 billion.

In an official announcement made on Monday night, Twitter said it will become a privately held firm upon completion of the transaction. The announcement came after marathon discussions between Musk and Twitter's board.

The price is 38% more than the stock's close on April 1, the last business day before the Tesla CEO disclosed a significant stake in the company, sparking a share rally.

"Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated," said Musk in a statement included with the release. "I also want to make Twitter better than ever by enhancing the product with new features, making the algorithms open source to increase trust, defeating the spam bots, and authenticating all humans," he added.

Earlier, Twitter had tried to ward off Musk's offer that did not have the mechanics of the acquisition. The platform took anti-takeover measures, called poison pill, to thwart the bid.

But the social media major's board began serious negotiations with Musk after he disclosed he had lined up as much $46.5 billion in financing – $25.5 billion in loans and $21 billion in personal equity.

Earlier, the guesstimate of the buyout was $43 billion. The bill went by $1 billion after Twitter disclosed more shares at its disposal.

B'LURU WILL BE 'NUMBER 1' SILICON CITY: BOMMAI

Bengaluru: CM Basavaraj Bommai said on Monday that his government wants to make Bengaluru "number 1" Silicon City in the world, and assured of better infrastructure and traffic decongestion | P4

3-HR LONG MEET

Congress sets up panels, no word on PK

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Congress on Monday constituted an Empowered Action Group to prepare the party for the Lok Sabha polls in 2024 after examining a comprehensive revival plan proposed by political strategist Prashant Kishor, but there was no word on his induction into the party.

An eight-member committee that studied Kishor's plan held a three-hour long meeting at Congress chief Sonia Gandhi's 10, Janpath residence, following which it was decided to set up the empowered group.

Kishor's meeting with Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao last weekend, following which the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi decided to hire the strategist's I-PAC for poll work, seems to have become the latest sticking point in his induction with a section of the committee sharing concerns about his loyalty and conflict of interest with Sonia. There were indications that the call on getting him on board the Congress could be delayed.

The party also announced six panels to do the spadework ahead of the Congress 'Chintan Shivir' in Udaipur from May 13-15. G-23 members like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Manish Tewari and Bhupinder Singh Hooda found berths in the panels. Kerala's Ramesh Chennithala, too, was included. P9

IOB, Central Bank divestment on fast-track after good results

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

THE Centre plans to accelerate the process of privatisation of the Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) and Central Bank of India after the two banks posted good quarterly results, finance ministry sources said. The government's public policy think tank Niti Aayog has already proposed the names of these two PSBs to the core group of Secretaries on Disinvestment (CGD) for privatisation.

"We had to put a halt to the privatisation process in between because of the protests by bank associations and State elections. But now, after the banks registered positive results in the December quarter, it will gather steam. CGD is assessing the proposal submitted by Niti Aayog," an official told this newspaper.

Another official pointed out that there is no provision for privatisation of banks in the Bank Nationalization Act. So, an amendment is needed in the Act to privatise the state-owned lenders. "A few amendments have been proposed to the Banking Regulation Act and Bank Nationalisation Act to facilitate the privatisation. We are trying to make an attractive scheme related to employees' compensation to avoid strikes," he said.

In the October-December quarter, Chennai-based IOB's net profit doubled to ₹454 crore against ₹213 crore in the year-ago period. In the same period, Central Bank of India registered a 69% increase in its net profit at ₹279 crore.

LIC IPO INVESTING WINDOW EXPECTED TO OPEN ON MAY 4, CLOSE ON MAY 9 | P13

EXPRESS READ

Lokayukta post vacant amid scams, corruption

The inaction on the part of the state government in filling the post of Lokayukta, which has been vacant for almost three months, has not only brought proceedings under its jurisdiction to a standstill, but also raised doubts over the delay in appointment. Former Lokayukta Justice N Santosh Hegde said the Lokayukta institution has been weakened. P4

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN
SAAT-2022
Empowering students for a brighter future
APPROVAL & RECOGNITION
Approved by UGC & BCI
Re-accredited by NAAC with 'A' Grade
Accredited by NBA
Ranked in QS World Rankings 2022
MHRD India Rankings (NIRF) 2021
20th Best in University Category
Law Programmes Offered
BA LLB (H) - Integrated Law
BBA LLB (H) - Integrated Law
LLB (H) - 3 Years Law
LLM
To apply for admission through SAAT, Please visit: www.soa.ac.in

TORQUE
"Gao Miyan Malhar Yaa Bhimpalasi, TOREX Cough Syrup Hai Toh Alvida Khansi"
TOREX
COUGH SYRUP
100 ml
ALVIDA KHANSI
TORQUE
/TorexSyrup
TOREX
COUGH SYRUP HAI TO ALVIDA KHANSI
For more information, please contact : +91 97792 14455, +91 73199 35154 (Whatsapp) / care@torquepharma.com